

CHINA'S SOFT POWER APPLICATION THROUGH EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY
IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

There remains ample research and debate on the topic of soft power and how nations are implementing it abroad and what implications that creates for informing U.S. policymakers. China's growing presence and interests within Africa present an opportunity to explore its use of soft power. This combined social science research study aims to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate how China is implementing soft power through mechanisms of technology and education in Africa. The findings suggest that both education and technology are found in most African states and thereby present opportunities for soft power mechanisms to be exerted onto African audiences, with Morocco, South Africa, and Kenya containing the highest presence of both variables. A case study of education and technology within Morocco conferred two dominant narratives of opportunity and government alignment to positively convey Chinese government and traditional culture. The combination of technology, education, and soft power tools reinforces current literature stating the importance for further exploring soft power as a concept, understanding its application from non-Western audiences, and contextualizing the role of cultural heritage and economic prosperity within China's soft power strategy and aspirations in Africa. This research can be used as a baseline for further studies on soft power application or its efficacy within African audiences which is important for analysis aiming to grasp Chinese intent used to inform US national security policy and investment.

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of China on the world stage is causing concern and creating complexity for Western policymakers that increasingly fear and question China's intent, growing influence, and perceived power across global audiences. The current Interim National Security Strategy explicitly cites that China's increase in power along with its mounting assertiveness elevates its threat potential, becoming a concern to U.S. national security. Alongside Russia, China is no longer considered a regional adversary. Now being considered a growing and great power, mitigations and considerations within U.S. grand strategy and foreign policy are required. Multiple disciplines continue to explore trends of China's increasing influence to better understand, inform, and create awareness to what is currently happening globally. From political science to government think-tanks and intelligence agencies, the dynamics and measurements of power become increasingly important for policy planning and strategy.

Questions concerning the extent of and means by which China's rising influence and power implicates U.S. national security is complicated by its global scale. The relative hard and soft power discussions and estimates aim to study where, how, and what tools China is using to expand and exert its own interests around the globe; however, soft power remains difficult to grasp. Defining, studying, or even measuring soft power and its effectiveness is highly debated and requires further discussion. Therefore, this social science research study will intend to narrow the focus regionally to within Africa to understand how China applies soft power through education and technology with a mixed methods approach utilizing statistical data, content analysis, and a case study.

First, a discussion on the current understanding and challenges conceptualizing soft power will be discussed. How soft power is perceived from a Chinese perspective will be

considered as well as the application of soft power to the concept of cultural diplomacy. Next, Power Transition Theory and China Threat Theory will also be discussed to provide fidelity on why China's power assessments, such as soft power, matters to the West. Literature surrounding soft power will be useful in analyzing China's approach within Africa, providing opportunity for additional insights to China's soft power strategy aimed at influencing audiences abroad. The influence soft power can have on persuading mindsets and cultural attitude towards China is critical when discussing how they counter and challenge Western discourse, explaining why policymakers are concerned. Therefore, a focus on education and technology as a fundamental conduit to access of information will provide a unique understanding of soft power dynamics within Africa and potentially offer areas for further research for comparison with other regions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Soft Power, Cultural Diplomacy, and the Chinese Perspective

Understanding Soft Power and its Limitations for Universal Application

Joseph Nye is a prominent political scientist who is attributed with coining the concept of soft power used across disciplines. Nye describes soft power as a "descriptive rather than a normative concept" that is powerful enough to be used for twisting minds, either for good or malicious intent.¹ In discussing the notion of state power, Nye explains just how prominent soft power is as it can go virtually unnoticed in everyday life and throughout history despite being a concept frequently debated amongst scholars, state leaders, or media outlets since the 1980's.²

Nye's description of soft power as a state political tool with the "ability to obtain preferred outcomes through attraction and persuasion"³ is commonly understood and referenced amongst political scientists or economists when defining soft power, especially in comparison to hard power, which is understood as a coercive tool executed via elements of economic or military force traditionally associated with a state's status. Therefore, while hard power is commonly understood through tangible elements of state power, soft power is more complex and involves a confluence of intangible phenomena that shapes how people think and act such as culture, ideology, or institutions.⁴

Shaun Breslin expands on soft power, discussing how it is widely recognized despite being highly varied in its understanding as a conceptual definition amongst different audiences

¹ Nye, Joseph S. "Why China Is Weak on Soft Power," Harvard Kennedy School, January 17, 2012, 1-15, <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/why-china-weak-soft-power>.

² Nye, Joseph S. (2012) China and soft power, South African Journal of International Affairs, 151, DOI: [10.1080/10220461.2012.706889](https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2012.706889)

³ Ibid., 151.

⁴ Wang, Hongying, and Yeh-Chung Lu. "The Conception of Soft Power and Its Policy Implications: a Comparative Study of China and Taiwan." *Journal of Contemporary China* 17, no. 56 (June 19, 2008): 425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670560802000191>.

throughout different disciplines or countries.⁵ He argues the lack of a common definition means there is not a shared understanding necessary to better comprehend the concept, particularly when looking at China's analytic approach to soft power. His argument for a different cultural and non-Western approach to defining the term is recognized amongst many scholars. Furthermore, Nye concludes that China's attempt at soft power aims to promote a positive national image abroad. Nye argues that despite China's embrace of soft power, its attempt at promoting a positive image, sometimes referred to as its "charm offensive," has largely failed.⁶ Nye considers China's soft power initiatives weak due to negative public opinion polls in the U.S., Europe, South Korea, Japan, and India.⁷ Furthermore, he asserts that soft power is not a zero-sum game since there are attractive aspects to every culture, however, China's internet censorship and various human rights abuses are largely contributing to its ineffective soft power influence abroad.⁸

Similar to arguments made by Breslin, research by Blanchard and Lu would counter Nye's conclusions, arguing there is a lack of understanding of soft power across literature and policy, particularly when assessing China's approach to soft power. Blanchard and Lu think similarly to Breslin, asserting the term is used too loosely since it is not well understood and arguing for a better conceptualization of the term as a target that can be measured so that it can be properly assessed and informative to policy such as the Interim U.S. National Security Strategy.⁹ The document mentions China 15 times, more than any other country, and specifically

⁵ Breslin, Shaun. Publication. *The Soft Notion of China's 'Soft Power.'* Chatham House, February 2011. https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Asia/0211pp_breslin.pdf

⁶ Nye, Joseph S. "Why China Is Weak on Soft Power," 2012.

⁷ Ibid., para 9.

⁸ Ibid., para 4, 8, 12.

⁹ Blanchard, Jean-Marc F., and Fujia Lu. "Thinking Hard About Soft Power: A Review and Critique of the Literature on China and Soft Power." *Asian Perspective* 36, no. 4 (2012): 565-589. doi:10.1353/apr.2012.0021.

references soft power notions when it states, “by restoring U.S. credibility and reasserting forward looking global leadership, we will ensure that America, not China, sets the international agenda, working alongside others to shape new global norms and agreements that advance our interests and reflect our values.”¹⁰ Therefore, Blanchard and Lu argue that through better contextualization of soft power there can be ways to measure it, assess its efficacy, and as a result, form recommendations for policymakers, such as national security priorities that shape foreign policy. Since there is a lack of shared understanding, there is a lack of methods to measure it. Therefore, estimates of Chinese soft power fail to systematically understand it as a phenomenon with measurable variables that can be observed and exploited as a target. They highlight that the study of soft power involves multiple ways in which the topic can be explored or measured from conceptualization to operationalization within a country and audience. The way in which soft power is defined, implemented, dispersed, and received from multiple audiences varies, and therefore, they argue the Chinese perspective needs further understanding to recognize its application and mechanisms.

Additionally, the notion “sharp power” as discussed by Walker et al., also finds limitations to Nye’s definition in applying the tactics of how modern authoritarian states, such as China and Russia, are using, controlling, manipulating audiences. They argue that despite increased access to information via modern technology, the restriction of free expression, censorship, independent institutions, and manipulation of information for political control is a distinct form of power undermining democracy.¹¹ Therefore, they assert that the intent of authoritarian states, such as China, to influence, attract, and persuade is separate from soft power

¹⁰ United States White House, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, Washington D.C.: 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>.

¹¹ Walker, Christopher, Shanthi Kalathil, and Jessica Ludwig. “The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power.” *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 1 (2020): 127. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0010>.

through the censorship of information to audiences and enabled through the technology revolution in recent decades.

China's Perspective on Soft Power

Wang et al. explore the Chinese perspective of soft power and agree with critics of Nye, who believe that the concept of soft power needs to be fully understood and is currently limited by Nye's definition. They describe how soft power has been largely embraced and debated within Chinese and Taiwanese audiences and literature since Nye coined the term. He discusses how soft power has several translations, first appearing in Chinese discourse in 1997, and has only increased in modern Chinese academic and policy discussions.¹² Since appearing in Chinese discourse, the concept transforms amongst Chinese audiences who conceptualize it differently from Western audiences and should therefore be understood differently when analyzing its application from a Chinese perspective. They argue that a Chinese perspective on soft power is broader, involving multiple entities that can subtly persuade through logic, morality, and example. Therefore, this understanding of soft power accepts culture and values as a major component, like the Nye definition, but it extends the definition to encompass the role of morality and need for appeal in both domestic and foreign audiences. This definition goes beyond a state's ability to influence another state and instead infers "cultural and domestic institutions and values" which create "the ability to generate compliance in a society by moral example and persuasion."¹³

In their discussion of how Eastern audiences such as China interpret soft power differently from Nye and the West, they also claim that science and technology are equally

¹² Wang, Hongying, and Yeh-Chung Lu. "The Conception of Soft Power and Its Policy Implications: A Comparative Study of China and Taiwan." (June 19, 2008): 426.

¹³ Ibid., 427-428.

important tools of hard and soft power which can be applied beyond states and within organizations themselves.¹⁴ They assert that Chinese discourse views technology beyond its role within economics and through an ability to influence within enterprises via “brand names, human resources, and coordination capacity.”¹⁵ They assert that China perceives science and technology as important tools of soft power and considers them vital to countering America’s cultural dominance internationally, not just contributing strength to its economy. Therefore, science and technology become integral to operationalizing factors that Wang et al. identify as China’s interpretation of their soft power strength: Chinese culture, development model, and a peaceful foreign policy.¹⁶ In summary, Wang et al. argue Nye’s assumptions of soft power’s role in influencing other states is too narrow when applying it to a Chinese model, which defines soft power differently. To China, highlighting Chinese cultural heritage, stressing China’s growing economic prosperity, and applying soft power domestically and abroad is the ability to create national coherence and government legitimacy that influences people through morality and the example that is inherent to Chinese traditional heritage.¹⁷

Scholarly discussions on the concept of how to understand soft power become important for government agencies and policy makers that are responsible for informing foreign policy and national security strategies. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a prominent think-tank that publishes extensively on elements of Chinese soft power. Glaser and Murphey, on behalf of the CSIS, assert that despite wide acceptance and debate amongst Chinese audiences of the concept of soft power, there also lacks a, “comprehensive, coherent national soft-power strategy” despite strategically “disparate” policies aiming to implement it. Glaser and

¹⁴ Ibid., 430.

¹⁵ Ibid., 430.

¹⁶ Ibid., 439.

¹⁷ Ibid., 431.

Murphey contend that, despite Chinese efforts to use soft power abroad by promoting socialist views that counter Western diplomacy and values, there will be an aversion to directly and overtly compete with the West.¹⁸ The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) 2020 Annual Report to Congress on China's military and security developments claims China will continuously seek to strengthen its soft power through boosting its economic and technological strength in addition to thorough educational exchange and Confucius institutions that aim to carry the campaign of the Peoples Republic of China to audiences abroad.¹⁹

Furthermore, research by Kalimuddin et al. cites President Xi Jinping's 2017 speech as pivotal to considering soft power within international perceptions of power beyond traditional hard power paradigms of "gross domestic product, troop numbers, nuclear missiles."²⁰ Kalimuddin et al.'s observations are in alignment with government publications and national security strategies as he highlights China's soft power that aims to control dominant narratives and decrease opposition. He uses the South China Sea and Taiwan as two prominent examples in which China attempts to operationalize soft power to exert control over conversations, aiming to be seen as a "preferred partner" striving to establish "peace building mechanisms."²¹ Therefore, by controlling and reinforcing China as a peaceful and optimal actor in the Pacific region, China is aiming to counter any Western narratives that claim China as hostile and oppressive.

¹⁸ Glaser, Bonnie S., and Murphey, Melissa E., Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World: A Report of the CSIS Smart Power Initiative. United States: CSIS (Center for Strategic & International Studies), 2009. 10.

https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/090310_chinesesoftpower_chap2.pdf

¹⁹ Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020. Washington, DC: Secretary of Defense, 2020. 14, 131. <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-DOD-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>

²⁰ Kalimuddin, Mikail, and David A. Anderson. "Soft Power in China's Security Strategy." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2018): 114. Accessed June 12, 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26481912>.

²¹ Ibid., 117-119.

Cultural Diplomacy and its Application to Soft Power

Commonly discussed in parallel to soft power is the term “cultural diplomacy,” which is also seen as a state tool that is part of a larger public diplomacy promoting a state’s culture and foreign policy.²² Research by Mark Simon discusses how cultural diplomacy applies to soft power as it aims to persuade foreign audiences through attraction.²³ Research by Becard and Filho further analyze the concept of cultural diplomacy as instruments of China's modern diplomacy in exerting cultural soft power.²⁴ Their study is limited to media, cinema, and U.S. based Confucius Institutions as they explore their role as cultural diplomacy tools within a Chinese soft power framework. Their findings focus on the cultural promotion of soft power through media and education examples, particularly highlighting Confucius Institutes as the most profound use of cultural diplomacy abroad, which is only growing in the U.S.²⁵ Understanding both cultural diplomacy and soft power’s close correlation is important when contextualizing its role in Belt and Road Initiative (B.R.I) discussions. B.R.I. was coined in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping in his speech “One Belt, One Road”²⁶ which announced a global scale infrastructure projection aiming to increase China’s international footprint by connecting China to Europe via Central Asia.²⁷ B.R.I. is commonly discussed in context of a hard power strategy through the economic components of China’s investment abroad. China’s strategic goals

²² Simon, Mark. *A greater role for cultural diplomacy*. Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2009. 1-2. https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20090616_cdsp_discussion_paper_114_mark.pdf

²³ Ibid., 1.

²⁴ Becard, Danielly Silva Ramos, and Paulo Menechelli Filho. “Chinese Cultural Diplomacy: Instruments in China’s Strategy for International Insertion in the 21st Century.” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 62, no. 1 (2019). Para 1, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201900105>.

²⁵ Ibid., 1-2, 26-27.

²⁶ Cai, Peter. “Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative.” Lowy Institute. Lowy Institute, March 22, 2017. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/understanding-belt-and-road-initiative>.

²⁷ Yu, H. (2016). Motivation behind China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ Initiatives and Establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 26(105), 353. doi:10.1080/10670564.2016.1245894

describing an intent to expand its footprint globally, economic gain, or political affluence is more recently attributed to their Vision 2035, 14th Five Year Plan, and Go Out Policy.

Despite an increase in research on soft power and China's investment and strategy abroad, there remains debate on its definition, and therefore a coherent understanding of what soft power is and how to define, characterize, measure, and assess China's use or efficacy. Discourse aiming to understand China's strategy abroad is critical to understanding and navigating the increasingly tense geopolitical climate between China and the West, strategic rhetoric, and broader global trends. The implications of understanding soft power as a tool of the Chinese state is fundamental to informing U.S. policy and national security priorities.

The Threat of China's Rise: Power Transition Theory and China Threat Theory

Both Power Transition Theory and China Threat Theory have been traditionally used since the conclusion of WWII in explaining global geopolitical trends and Western reactions to China's perceived increase in power. When discussing aspects of national power, particularly via hard or soft power dynamics, it is essential to grasp both of these theories which have been prominently discussed in both the U.S. and China. Power Transition Theory presents a realist view that states react to shifts in hierarchy of power based on measures of relative national power positions. Political scientist scholar A.F.K. Organski was the first to coin the theory in 1958, arguing that a hierarchy amongst states existed based on these perceptions of power in which dominant, great, middle, and small power states coexisted or challenge the system. There remain many debates and ongoing discussions regarding how to define or measure relative power, especially as technology and globalization continue to change global political, economic, and social dynamics. However, despite being largely recognized across disciplines there are several critics of this theory, which they believe relies heavily on realist assumptions or a narrowed

Western perspective. Power Transition Theory assumes state dynamics are determined by power politics and hierarchy, with the following assumptions: dominant states hold the most power, war is always possible and even inevitable, and power politics will continue to fluctuate.

Research by Chan challenges these assumptions driving Power Transition Theory and considers the theory to be misleading and over-generalized in describing relationships of other states since the interpretation of state perception is singular and overly provocative when describing the international system.²⁸ He contends not all states may think the same way or want to change or challenge the international system. He also asserts that China still has more growth to do before reaching the power and status which the U.S. has achieved.²⁹ Furthermore, he argues that wars, more often than not, are initiated by declining states and not those rising in power, thereby contradicting the belief that rising states are those who act to challenge the powerful. Jeffrey also challenges the theory as she argues the prospect of war is unlikely, the notions of power hierarchies focus more on war than peace, and states are largely mischaracterized due to a "misappropriation of historical precedents."³⁰ Similarly, Broomfield argues that Power Transition Theory is outdated and does not apply to the modern context of the Chinese state, which is different from the Russian and German contexts to which Power Transition Theory was originally applied. The idea of a state's power driving international dynamics and how power is applied or perceived is a commonality found within these debates.

The China Threat Theory is based on the confluence of discourse describing China as a credible state threat to other powerful states which is similar to the realist logic driving Power

²⁸ Chan, Steve. *China, the US, and the Power-Transition Theory: A Critique*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2008. 7. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203940662>.

²⁹ Ibid., 7.

³⁰ Jeffrey, Renée "Evaluating the 'China Threat': Power Transition Theory, the Successor-State Image and the Dangers of Historical Analogies," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 2 (2009): pp. 312, 321, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357710902895186>.

Transition Theory. China Threat Theory attempts to apply aspects of the Power Transition Theory with a focus on the ideological, economic, and military challenges China presents as a rising power to the West.³¹ However, similar to Jeffrey and Chan, research by Broomfield argues this theory relies on Western interpretations of Chinese rhetoric, actions, intent, and policy, both domestically and abroad. There is an underlying assumption that China poses a threat solely because they challenge or counter U.S. interests and the international status quo. Broomfield asserts the theory fails to acknowledge China's economic partnerships and engagement globally, inferring there is a possibility of China liberalizing and accepting the current international system "as a legitimate, stable, and peaceful force."³² These assumptions are problematic for many who view China's state intent skeptically. This is especially true for those in favor of China Threat Theory and the current tone of U.S. and many Western national security policies, threat assessments, and strategic rhetoric. Furthermore, Broomfield argues that China's rise and actions to prepare itself as a credible nation are being misattributed as antagonistic by the West and can be supported by China's benign record.³³ The notion of a benign record is largely challenged globally by those who caution against China's environmental track record, humanitarian concerns, and territorial violations in the region. This logic and debate aligned with the China Threat Theory recently made headlines as China's embassy in London criticized the tone of NATO and EU summits in 2021. The Chinese embassy claims there is an exaggeration of the China Threat Theory in European strategic discussions which misjudge and slander China's image and actions abroad.³⁴

³¹ Broomfield, Emma V. "Perceptions of Danger: The China Threat Theory," *Journal of Contemporary China* 12, no. 35 (2003): pp. 299, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1067056022000054605>.

³² Ibid, 266.

³³ Ibid., 284.

³⁴ Blanchard, Ben. "China Urges NATO to Stop Exaggerating 'China Threat Theory'." Edited by Jacqueline Wong. Reuters. Thomson Reuters, June 15, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china-urges-nato-stop-exaggerating-china-threat-theory-2021-06-15/>.

Despite these theories largely explaining U.S. rhetoric, policy, and national security priorities, some scholars pose a need for new analytic frameworks and further understanding of power politics. Understanding these theories is essential since they remain commonly discussed and relevant as they are prominent in U.S. strategic thought. There remains a need for further insight to characterizing the notions of "threat" or "power" that describe international relations, particularly in ongoing conversations of how China imposes on the West.

China's Soft Power in Africa

China's interests within the African continent continue to grasp the attention of researchers, Western intelligence analysts, and the U.S. government. As mentioned, many conversations discuss China's growth in investment and diplomatic engagement in Africa, particularly through its B.R.I. initiatives and international and diplomatic forums where China focuses on "strengthening political and economic ties."³⁵ Daniele Carminati regularly discusses the role of China's soft power dynamics internationally and asserts that the economic approach within China's soft power strategy makes it particularly appealing to developing nations in Latin America and Africa. Therefore, by studying where China is investing and engaging in industry and governments abroad, the opportunity for economic approaches to assessing the appeal of "considerable economic gains following the completion of a high-speed railway or a new 5G network" offered by technology that Wang et. al highlight can also be studied alongside the benefits of "educational and professional opportunities offered by cultural institutes" through a soft power lens aiming to "cultivate goodwill towards China."³⁶

³⁵ Carminati, Daniele. "Pushing the Boundaries of Soft Power: The Controversial Chinese Case." *E International Relations*, July 11, 2018. 2. <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/07/11/pushing-the-boundaries-of-soft-power-the-controversial-chinese-case/>.

³⁶ Carminati, Daniele. "The State of China's Soft Power in 2020." *E International Relations*, July 3, 2020. 2. <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/03/the-state-of-chinas-soft-power-in-2020/>.

There exists ample research on China's use of soft power within Africa, however, it is largely limited to the role of Confucius Institutes, public opinions surveys in audiences abroad, or the presence and content of media and news outlets. The research by Blanchard and Lu discussed previously on the understanding of soft power highlights research by Liang that focuses on China's use of economics as soft power within Africa.³⁷ Furthermore, they support Liang's claim that economic payments are part of China's soft power application in Africa who use the payments to generate appeal alongside narratives promoting its "culture, political values, and economic model."³⁸ Therefore, Blanchard, Lu, and Liang support the claims by Wang et al. that the Chinese perspective on cultural heritage and its prosperous economic models are tools for influence and therefore soft power mechanisms. Furthermore, Blanchard and Lu remark how Africa presents a unique and favorable region for China to implement soft power since China's political values, cultural values, and economic goals are not universally embraced or attractive to other nations and cultures, which suggests why "China's soft-power efficacy seems greater" in Africa as a developing region compared to developed nations.³⁹

Research by Procopio, for example, aims to study the effectiveness of Confucius Institutes specifically as a Chinese cultural soft power tool in South Africa. Their findings suggest that since the establishment of Confucius Institutes in 2004 as a foreign policy tool to spread Chinese language and culture, these institutes alone have been partially effective in promoting a positive perception and acceptance of China.⁴⁰ She argues that Confucius Institutes are largely overestimated in their longer-term impact on the perceptions of local audiences,

³⁷ Blanchard, Jean-Marc F., and Fujia Lu. "Thinking Hard About Soft Power:(2012): 585.

³⁸ Ibid., 585.

³⁹ Ibid., 585.

⁴⁰ Procopio, Maddalena. "The Effectiveness of Confucius Institutes as a Tool of China's Soft Power in South Africa." *African East-Asian Affairs*, no. 2 (June 2015): 120-121. <https://doi.org/10.7552/0-1-2-155>.

particularly students pursuing studies within a Confucius Institute. Therefore, she contends that exposure and experience beyond attending a Confucius Institute is needed to create a larger impact in their future lives that advocates for China.⁴¹ Her research does support that Confucius Institutes are a useful tool of soft power since they promote Chinese culture and serve as a gateway for audiences to create experiences. However, only looking at Confucius Institutes and an education approach to influence audiences abroad as a soft power Chinese cultural mechanism is limiting.

Similar to the research by Procopio, Wang et. al, and Blanchard and Lu who underscore the need to understand China's implementation of soft power, particularly in areas where its economic expansion is high in developing regions such as Africa which Glaser and Murphey highlight in the CSIS report.⁴² Glaser and Murphey identify investment, peacekeeping and humanitarian aid, exchange programs, diplomacy, and multilateral institutions as instruments of Chinese soft power in Africa. Their analysis contends that engagement between Morocco and China is mostly within senior levels of government with officials on both sides asserting political legitimacy. Therefore, there remains an "incomplete understanding of the culture, values, and ways of life of average African citizens"⁴³ within Africa. The lack of understanding and consistent engagement signifies the need to better understand how soft power is being implemented amongst African audiences beyond senior levels of government. Furthermore, Carminati asserts that strategic narratives a country aims to convey in creating attraction and

⁴¹ Ibid., 120-121.

⁴² Glaser, Bonnie S., and Murphey, Melissa E., *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World: a Report of the CSIS Smart Power Initiative*. 2009. 2.

⁴³ Ibid., 6.

exerting influence are important when looking at the efficacy of soft power in audiences abroad.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Carminati, Daniele. "Contextualizing Soft Power's Analysis: The Value of Attractive National Features." *E International Relations*, February 8, 2021. 1. <https://www.e-ir.info/2021/02/08/contextualizing-soft-powers-analysis-the-value-of-attractive-national-features/>.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does China apply soft power through methods of education and technology in Africa?

There exists ample research and national security estimates on the growth of China's influence throughout the globe. The implications of China's B.R.I. and extent of China's hard and soft power footprint are evolving and remain important to informing the U.S. government on global trends for policy decisions and engagement abroad. As the topic of soft power continues to be explored and debated, there remains opportunity for further analysis that can build on existing theory. A mixed-method approach that narrows the topic of soft power can aim to better understand how it is implemented and understood through a case study and a data driven approach. Together, a qualitative and quantitative analysis offers a well-rounded research strategy aiming to gauge China's soft power actions abroad by posing the question of how China is applying soft power through specific methods of education and technology in Africa. More often, technological investment is analyzed through an economic lens as an element of hard power. By approaching how technological investment and education are implemented in Africa, a better understanding of these elements as tools of soft power can be understood. This research will aim to identify and understand trends of education and technology being operationalized in Africa as Chinese tools of soft power.

METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESIS

A combined methodology will be used to provide numerical data and nuance in understanding how both elements of education and technology are being used specifically as soft power tools amongst Africa's 54 countries, excluding overseas or disputed territories. Soft power will be narrowed to two elements: education and technology. Education is traditionally discussed in the context of soft power discussions; however, technology is not, being more commonly addressed relative to Chinese investment in B.R.I. from economic or hard power discussions. Discussion of these two variables, specifically in the context of a soft power analysis, allows for the topics to be discussed in context together with a narrow focus that aims at extracting soft power implications. Additionally, non-Western sources of information will be used as much as possible based on available data in order to provide a non-biased lens that aims to provide the Chinese and African perspective on how these two variables are being operationalized through soft power influence.

Only countries with each variable present will be used for analysis with the assumption that there will be some countries in Africa that have neither variable present. The education variable will only focus on established Confucius Institutes within Africa and will not include institutional exchanges or research partnerships due to constraints of finding reliable data. A Confucius Institute will be defined as a "non-profit public institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China whose stated aim is to promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teaching internationally, and facilitate cultural exchanges."⁴⁵ The technology variable will encompass a broad range of digital equipment or planned contracts for hardware and software to include: surveillance equipment, 5G equipment, smart city projects,

⁴⁵ "Confucius Institutes Around the World – 2021." *Dig Mandarin* (blog). Dig Mandarin, February 2021. <https://www.digmandarin.com/confucius-institutes-around-the-world.html>.

joint ventures/subsidiaries/commercial partnerships with digital firms, security equipment or technical training, telecommunications equipment, and information and communications device equipment. Both education and technology will be the two variables being analyzed in context of soft power which will be defined as: exerting influence on others through attraction of cultural principles, heritage, values, and policies that obtain desirable outcomes that do not rely any form of forced coercion.⁴⁶

First, a quantitative analysis through descriptive statistics, data coding, figures, and charts will provide a baseline understanding of the presence of each variable for opportunity as a soft power tool. Analysis of the geographical footprint of these aspects through a heat map will illustrate the extent of where Chinese education and technology is present throughout Africa. Descriptive statistics and data coding will allow each variable to be compared for trend analysis and identification of outliers suggesting which states China has created opportunity to apply these tools. The data coding will contextualize the numerical data into an interval scale that will categorize each variable by country. Based on data results, one country designated as an outlier containing a higher percentage of both variables will be used for the qualitative case study analysis due to a greater amount of data available for analysis.

The amount of education and technology, as defined above, will be first counted for analysis before the data coding.⁴⁷ The amount of each variable present by country will be compiled for statistical analysis. The geographical presence of each variable, depicted via a heat map, will illustrate the presence and extent of each variable based on the coded data for each

⁴⁶ Nye, Joseph S. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 94–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699>.

⁴⁷ Hoffman, Samantha. "Mapping China's Tech Giants: Covid-19, Supply Chains and Strategic Competition." *The Strategist*. ASPI, June 8, 2021. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/china-tech-giants-map-update-3-launch-major-updates/>.

country. The data coding will be key to contextualizing the numbers and identifying any trends or outliers. Based on the standard deviation found in education and technology, the data coding scale of four categories will be used, ranking the countries as minimal, low, moderate, or high based on the presence of each variable. Each variable by country will be separately coded first (Table B). Next, a sum of the coded numbers for each variable will be used to categorize the countries based on the presences of both variables. The final data code designated for each country will consists of four categories: not included, low, moderate, or high (Figure 3). The not included category will encompass countries that have do not have any variables present while the other three categories represent the amount both variables are present. Next, one country will be selected for the qualitative case study analysis from the identified outliers quantified as categorically high. A country designated as having a higher variable presence will be used for the case study since there is a higher chance of available data for analysis.

The qualitative analysis will be used to determine narrative trends of each variable as tools of soft power. Narrative trends will be defined as common words or patterns used to frame ideas associated to China, particularly its culture, politics, economics, or ideology. Content analysis will be conducted using information from ten different non-Western sources based on the release date, availability of English, and accessibility from a U.S. IP addresses. Both Chinese and local media from the chosen African state will be used as well as a public Facebook page from a Confucius Institute, official Chinese press releases, and publicly accessible informational web pages from a Chinese government website, Chinese-based university, and Confucius Institute. Since the aim of the research is to assess China's application of soft power to African and Chinese audiences of a particular African state and domestically in China, only recent Chinese sources, since 2000, will be used. Academic research that has studied Confucius

Institutes will be used to supplement historical and political context. The content analysis will identify narrative trends associated with each variable to demonstrate how each variable is being communicated to a specific audience in Africa or interested audiences in China as a soft power tool. Major narrative trends from the content analysis will be discussed within context of the country's diplomatic history with China, and specific narrative elements found with education and technology.

In an analysis of how soft power is implemented through a combination of education and technology in Africa, the research is expected to identify geographic trends within Africa and designate the states where China is prioritizing both variables as soft power tools and how they are being used as instruments of soft power on subject audiences. The presence of both elements by country is being analyzed to assess where both elements are present and therefore possess greater opportunity to be utilized as soft power tools for influence. The qualitative and quantitative analysis is expected to identify how education and technology are tools of soft power. States with strong diplomatic and ideological alignment with the Chinese government are anticipated to have a higher presence of both variables with narratives reinforcing China's cultural heritage and economic growth positively. The qualitative analysis is expected to identify how each variable is being communicated and presented through narrative trends exposed to Africans and Chinese audiences as soft power tools. The independent variable is the presence of Chinese technology and education within Africa via Confucius Institutes, technology services, or digital hardware. The dependent variable is the frequency of these specific examples of education and technology and the narrative trends associated with each as tools of soft power for China. The null hypothesis is an absence of education and technology and the narrative trends associated with each variable as tools of China's soft power campaign within Africa.

Research Question: <i>How does China apply soft power through methods of education and technology in Africa?</i>	
<i>What is the footprint?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide geographical trends and baseline, identify outliers 	<i>What narratives are being used?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide nuisance to the narrative trends associated with each variable as a soft power tool • Analyze only non-Western sources
Method: Quantitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical Analysis & Data Coding 	Method: Qualitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study and Content Analysis
Display: Charts, Tables	Display: Table, Code Tree, and Discussion
Data Sources: Information available online that is accessible, reliable, and in English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASPI Database • Chinese Blog: Dig Mandarin list 	Data Sources: 10 online, relatively recent, and assessable English documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Chinese government sources (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peoples Republic of China press release and Chinese Foreign Ministry informational web page on Morocco as a African Member State following an Forum on China-African Cooperation Summit in Beijing) • Four Chinese news articles from three Chinese media companies (China Daily, Xinhua Global Times, Xinhua Net) • Two Moroccan news articles from a Moroccan media company (Morocco World News) • One official informational web page from a Moroccan based Confucius Institute (Confucius Institute at Morocco University Mohammed V) • One article from a Chinese based University discussing a visit by the Morocco Hassan-II University Confucius Institute (Shanghai International Studies University) • One Facebook web page from a Moroccan based Confucius Institute (Confucius Institute at University Hassan II Casablanca)

Table 1: Mixed Methodology Approach and Data Sources for Analysis

DATA

Quantitative Analysis: Presence of Education and Technology Throughout Africa

The research focuses on two variables of education and technology applied in the context of soft power. For the quantitative analysis two different secondary data sources were used to compile information for each variable. Education was measured using a list of Confucius Institutes that is published online and regularly updated by “Dig Mandarin,” a Chinese sponsored blog dedicated to promoting and providing resources for audiences abroad to learn Mandarin.⁴⁸ Technology was measured using the database from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's (ASPI) International Cyber Policy Center.⁴⁹ Although the data for technology is being derived from a Western source, this database compiles information from Chinese sources that monitor 27 different Chinese technology companies. The database is frequently updated since June 2021 and robust, containing 3,800 global entries and 38,000+ data points.

First, data compilation from the two sources above depicts the amount of Confucius Institutes in the education variable and the various types of sources for the technology variable by country (Table B). Following accumulation of data, data coding is used to contextualize the amount of each variable (Table B). Descriptive statistics aided in determining trends of both variables, particularly the mean, mode, standard deviation, and range that aided in building the scale for data coding of each variable (Table 2, Table A). The averages of both technology and education throughout Africa are similar, as most countries within Africa had at least one of the variables present. The standard deviation and range were higher with technology, suggesting the amount of technology between countries is more varied and there is a potential for a higher

⁴⁸ “Confucius Institutes Around the World – 2021.” *Dig Mandarin* (blog). February 2021.

⁴⁹ Danielle Cave, Samantha Hoffman, Fergua Ryan, Nathan Attrill, Audrey Fritz, Vicky Xu, Daria Impiombato, Lin Li, Alex Joske, and Elise Thomas. “Mapping China's Tech Giants,” 2021.
<https://chinatechmap.aspi.org.au/#/homepage/>.

presence in certain countries. However, the mode of technology, which was zero, compared to education, which was one, suggests more countries have education present. This can be illustrated in the pie charts, (Figure 1) indicating the individual and total amount of each variable throughout Africa.

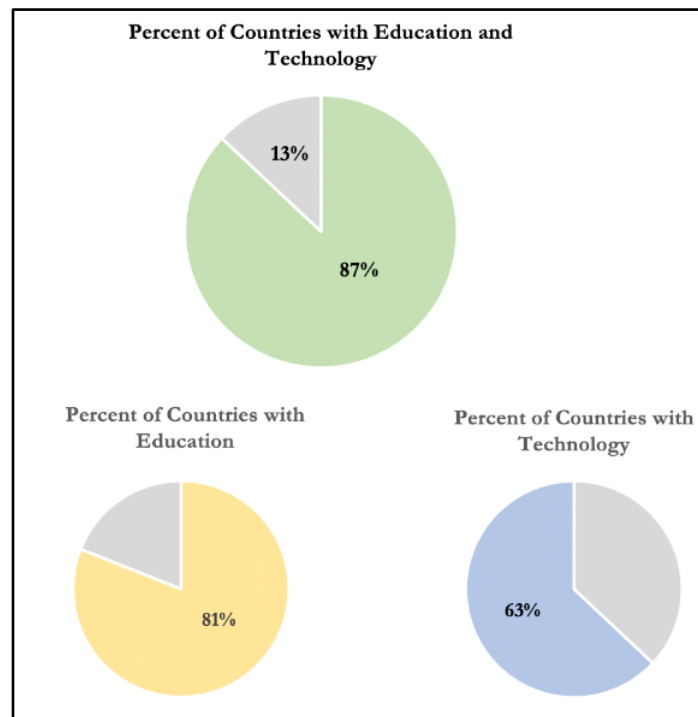


Figure 1: Percentage of Education and Technology within Africa

Overall, both variables were found in 87 percent of African nations, equating to 47 countries. Education occupies a larger footprint within Africa by 19 percent since education was found in 82 percent of countries compared to the 63 percent of countries with technology present. Furthermore, Figure 2 displays the data from Table B demonstrating a greater range for technology (blue) within a country while education (yellow) is found more consistently across countries. Therefore, although some countries may contain a higher amount of technology, the

presence of education alone was found more often. The presence of both variables suggests there is opportunity for Chinese application of soft power.

Data coding was based on the presence of each variable in order to contextualize the amount of each variable by country. The standard deviation and range for each category determined the range for the interval scale specific to each category. Countries were designated on a scale of one to four which represent a minimal, low, mode, or high presence for each variable. The combined coded numbers of the variable were analyzed to yield a combined data code of low, minimal or high (Table B, Figure 3). The compiled data code by country of both variables is depicted on the heat map (Figure 3) indicating the northern and southern regions contain a higher presence of Chinese education and/or technology. Both the data chart (Figure 2, Table B) and the heat map (Figure 3) identify three “high” outlier countries: Kenya, South Africa, and Morocco. All three outlier countries are considered to maintain diplomatic and economic ties to China.

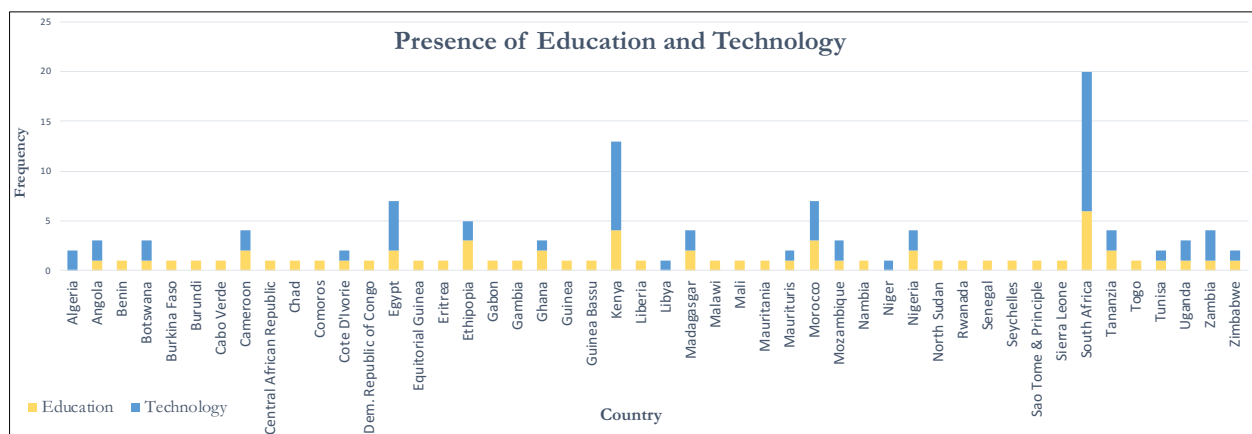


Figure 2: Education and Technology Data by Country Before Data Coding

	Education	Technology
Significance	Code	Code
Minimal Presence	0	0
Low Presence	1	1 to 3
Moderate Presence	2	3 to 6
High Presence	2 or more	6 or more

Table 2: Coding Table for Education and Technology

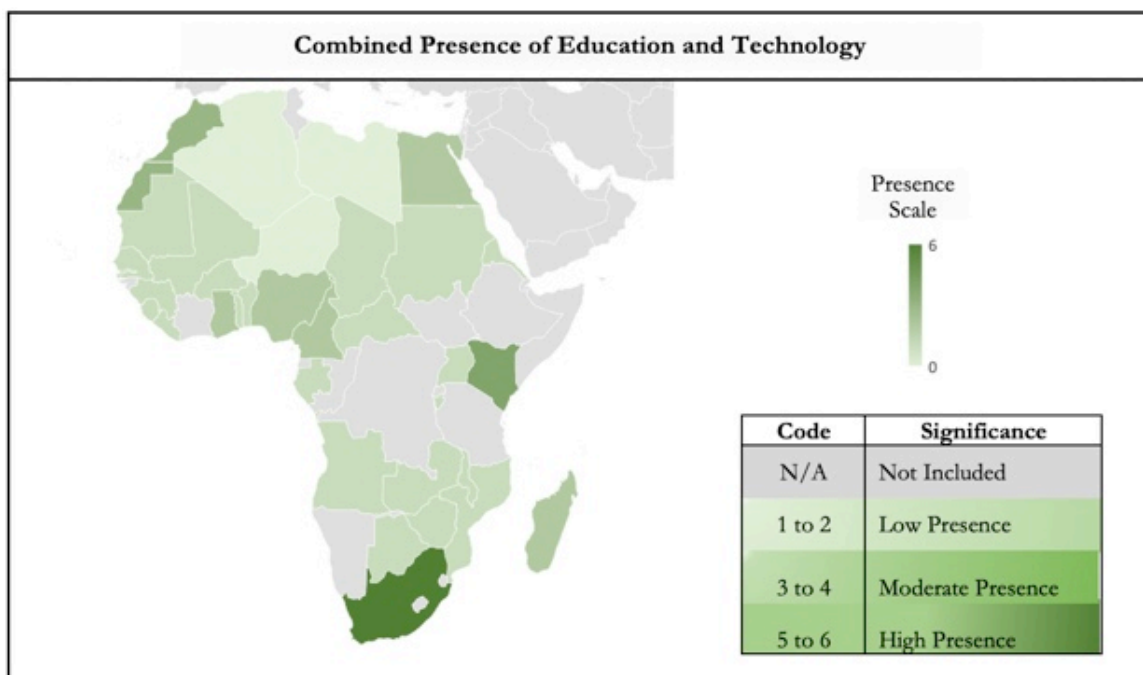


Figure 3: Heat Map Depicting the Combined Presence of Education and Technology

Qualitative Analysis: Case Study on Soft Power Narratives Associated with Education and Technology in Morocco

Historical and Modern Context of Diplomatic Relations

According to the China's Foreign Ministry online information from 2006, diplomatic relations between Morocco and China were established in 1958 when the first trade agreement

was signed.⁵⁰ Both nations regularly refer to each other as a key strategic partner sharing political and ideological values that harness mutual understandings and shared respect for state politics.⁵¹ Since 1996, there have been regular diplomatic meetings with 13 official visits by China to Morocco and six visits by Morocco to China.⁵² Moroccan King Mohammed VI conducted the most recent visit to China in 2016.⁵³ China has regularly sent students and medical teams to Morocco since 1975, and offers opportunities for Moroccan students to study abroad in China.⁵⁴ The history of Moroccan-Chinese relations dates back six decades and has evolved to become a strong strategic partnership with bilateral relations that support China's B.R.I. and various efforts including the forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the China-Arab States Cooperation.⁵⁵ Additionally, China highlights Morocco's support of China's sovereignty stance towards Taiwan and human rights,⁵⁶ two topics often criticized by the West.

Today, both countries continue to reinforce their strong government relationship via media outlets, official government statements, publications. Morocco views China as an important strategic partner critical to the Moroccan economy, trade, and technological pursuits. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, both leaders, King Mohammed and President Xi Jinping, held an official meeting virtually, resulting in a Chinese vow to support Morocco as needed. According to Moroccan World News, there have been seven million Sinopharm doses donated to

⁵⁰ "Morocco." china.org.cn. Chinese Foreign Ministry, October 10, 2006. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/focac/183433.htm#:~:text=China%20and%20Morocco%20established%20diplomatic,views%20on%20many%20international%20issues>. Para 2.

⁵¹ "President Xi Jinping Speaks with King Mohammed VI of Morocco on the Phone." *Fighting COVID-19*. President Xi Jinping Speaks with King Mohammed VI of Morocco on the Phone, September 1, 2020. People's Republic of China. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/kjgzbdffyq/t1811229.shtml.

⁵² Ibid., para 2.

⁵³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the People's Republic of China, President Xi Jinping Speaks with King Mohammed VI of Morocco on the Phone § (2020). https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/kjgzbdffyq/t1811229.shtml.

⁵⁴ Morocco." china.org.cn. Chinese Foreign Ministry, October 10, 2006. Para 1.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the People's Republic of China, § (2020).

⁵⁶ Morocco." china.org.cn. Chinese Foreign Ministry, October 10, 2006. Para 1.

Morocco by China, reaching at least 18 percent of their population.⁵⁷ Overall, the historical record of between both states demonstrated a strong diplomatic relationship built on a shared sense of trust and respect for political and cultural values.

Morocco: Content Analysis

Narrative Trends	Education	Technology
Opportunity	✓	✓
Cultural Heritage & Language	✓	
Travel	✓	
Quality of Life	✓	✓
Convenience	✓	✓
Employment	✓	✓
Government Alignment	✓	✓
Diplomatic & Political	✓	✓
Cultural Values	✓	✓
Economic		✓

Table 3: Narrative trends of Online Sources

Education and Technology Content Analysis

A content analysis aimed to identify narrative trends of both variables amongst 10 sources from accessible websites of the official Chinese government, Chinese institutions, Chinese Confucius Institute Facebook page, and online news articles from Chinese and Moroccan media outlets (Table C). The content analysis produced two dominant narratives of the promotion of opportunity and the reinforcement of government alignment. Academic research by Yellinek, Mann, and Lebel provides supplemental information to lend additional context to Confucius Institutes within Morocco. Morocco currently has three Confucius Institutes including

⁵⁷ Saf Kasraoui, Safaa. "COVID-19: Morocco Receives Half Million Doses of Sinopharm Vaccine." Morocco World News, May 2, 2021. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2021/05/341231/covid-19-morocco-receives-half-million-doses-of-sinopharm-vaccine>.

the Confucius Institute at Mohammed V University in Rabat, the Confucius Institute at Hassan II University in Casablanca, and the Confucius Institute at Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Tangier. All of these Institutes have been established post-2000, with the first opening in Rabat in 2008.⁵⁸ All three Confucius Institutions offer language classes and various cultural courses ranging from Chinese calligraphy to art, cooking, politics, economy, government, and public institutions.⁵⁹ According the Confucius Institute websites (Table C, sources 8-10), the benefits of cultural exchange are promoted through frequent comments about the value of bridging Arabic language and Arabic culture with Chinese Mandarin and Chinese practices. Therefore, the education variable reinforces literature on soft power that Confucius Institutes are tools for cultural immersion and influence.

The narrative of opportunity through the promotion of language and cultural classes to gain knowledge reinforces notions of convenience through the ability for any Moroccan age group to attend Confucius Institutes, with classes being offered to children as young as seven.⁶⁰ Besides the notions of opportunity through cultural exposure and convenience, the ability for travel to China is also highlighted. The academic competition, the “Chinese Bridge” begins on a national level and selects a winner amongst the three participating universities that have Confucius Institutes to compete internationally in China by demonstrating proficiency in Mandarin and Chinese culture.⁶¹ In 2016, a Moroccan student placed third overall in the international competition.⁶² The Facebook page for the Confucius Institute at University Hassan

⁵⁸ Roie Yellinek, Yossi Mann, and Udi Lebel. *Chinese Soft-Power in the Arab world – China’s Confucius Institutes as a central tool of influence* 39, no. 6 (November 6, 2020): 526. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2020.1826843>.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 527.

⁶⁰ Liangyu, ed. “Spotlight: Confucius Institute Sets up Bridge for China-Morocco Cultural Exchanges.” Xinhua Net, November 10, 2018. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-11/10/c_137595617.htm.

⁶¹ Roie Yellinek, et al., *Chinese Soft-Power in the Arab world – China’s Confucius Institutes as a central tool of influence* 39, (November 6, 2020): 527.

⁶² Ibid., 527.

II Casablanca (Table C, source 10) contains all the elements of opportunity, reinforcing the various benefits of pursuing courses and exploring Chinese culture. The cover photo of the webpage is a cartoon illustration depicting a harmonious blend of African and Chinese people interacting and engaging in various activities such as art, photography, celebrations, and gardening. The image reinforces the narrative of opportunity through a shared embrace of culture and language which offers improvements in quality of life through these activities.⁶³ Therefore, promotion and visual depictions on the Facebook page highlight the benefits of shared cultural and linguistic engagement which provides happiness and can improve an individual quality of life. In summary, all aspects of opportunity including cultural heritage, language, travel, quality of life, convenience, and employment were found across educational sources (Table C, sources 8-10). Additionally, the three Confucius Institutions and both the Chinese and Moroccan media sources frequently reinforce the importance of strong diplomatic and cultural ties between both countries since they embrace each other's cultural values through the "promotion of cultural exchange between the Arab world in general and China, which is more open to other cultures and civilizations."⁶⁴

For technological narratives (Table C, sources 1-5), both dominant narratives reinforcing opportunity and government alignment were continually reiterated across Moroccan and Chinese media and institutional outlets highlighting technological projects and economic partnerships within Morocco. There are four main technological investment projects found throughout Morocco including a smart city project in Marrakesh with Chinese company Huawei, a Police training course in Rabat provided by Meiya Pico Technology Firm, video surveillance equipment

⁶³ *Facebook.com*. Confucius Institute at University Hassan II Casablanca. Accessed June 20, 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/studyingchinese/>.

⁶⁴ "Confucius Institute in Rabat." Mohammed V University of Rabat Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences. Accessed 2021. <http://www.flshr.ac.ma/en>.

for Hassan II Mosque provided by Uniview, and a subsidiary along with several commercial partnerships with Dahua Technology, AVINA Corporation, PINET Industries, and Districap in Casablanca.⁶⁵ A reference to the Chinese-Moroccan government economic relationship was only found in technology sources stressing the value of the Moroccan market for foreign investment within Chinese industry. For Moroccan audiences, the Dahua Technology subsidiary asserts the value of the Moroccan market and its strong economy are indicators for building cooperation and government initiatives that enable economic growth.⁶⁶ Overall, the five technology sources reinforce the cultural, economic, and political aspects within government alignment narratives (Table 3, Table C).

The analysis of opportunity narratives associated with technology found consistent reference to quality of life, convenience, and employment. However, notions reinforcing cultural and linguistic values or travel opportunities were not identified. One of the Chinese news articles highlights the affordability of Huawei digital devices for any audience living in Morocco, stating, “as a student or a business starter, you often don't have money for the big fancy brands like Apple.”⁶⁷ The narratives continually reiterate the dominance of Huawei devices in Morocco, obtaining 15 percent share of the market over other dominant competitors used in the West such as Apple or Samsung. The opportunity narratives reinforcing convenience and quality of life are more often associated with Huawei technology and digital devices. Additionally, the mention of Huawei’s free digital devices offer to college students in the forms of tablets or video conferencing assistance is mentioned, further emphasizing the convenience and quality of life

⁶⁵ Cave, Danielle et al. “Mapping China's Tech Giants,” 2021.

⁶⁶ Dumpis, Toms. “Economic Delegation From China Visits Morocco, Talks Wind Energy.” <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/>. Moroccan World News, April 1, 2021. Para 7.

⁶⁷ “Chinese Mobile Phone Brands Gain Popularity in Morocco.” [Chinadaily.com.cn](http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202106/23/WS60d2ab48a31024ad0bacaf63.html). China Daily, June 23, 2021. <http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202106/23/WS60d2ab48a31024ad0bacaf63.html>.

narratives that China promotes abroad with its technology. Overall, analysis of education and technology sources demonstrated various trends reinforcing narratives of opportunity and government alignment between Morocco and China, thereby demonstrating how these variables are used as soft power tools to reinforce a power Chinese image within Morocco.

DISCUSSION

The data compiled in this combined research approach delved into how education and technology are being utilized as soft power tools in Africa, proving useful to current literature demanding further exploration of the concepts and operationalization of soft power, particularly in foreign models such as China. The quantitative analysis allowed for a baseline understanding of where both variables are geographically present, yielding regional trends and identifying outlier states that present the highest amount of each variable which China can utilize to exert influence. The initial estimates in the hypothesis, which assumed education and technology will be present throughout Africa as soft power tools is accurate. The assertion that the presence of both variables would be higher in countries more politically and diplomatically aligned with China is consistent with the qualitative analysis from Morocco, however, further research would be required to validate this assertion. The data also supports the assumptions within the hypothesis based on existing literature from Wang et al., suggesting that technology will be a soft power tool alongside education. Additionally, narratives of opportunity and government alignment incorporate Chinese soft power notions of cultural heritage and economic prosperity that Wang et al. identify. However, it is important to note that the 10 sources yielded two dominant narrative trends of opportunity and government alignment which is inclusive of references to Chinese culture and economy. Lastly, references to China's economic prosperity often cited in literature as a dominant soft power instrument were not found in the content analysis of Confucius Institutions, suggesting soft power initiatives utilizing education focused on culture. Additional research inclusive of more sources would be useful to validate these findings.

Additional research would be helpful to exploring both variables further, especially through alternate methodology such as a comparison of these two variables relative to other soft power variables (restaurants, entertainment, and other forms of media). The focus of this study aimed to understand a combined use of these two variables in order to improve current estimates on China's soft power approaches abroad and how China is implementing its soft power framework.

The data was consistent with the hypothesis indicating education and technology would correlate to soft power application, as the case study of Morocco denotes. The content analysis from the Moroccan case study and mapping of both education and technology aided in determining how China is creating opportunity for employing both of these variables as soft power mechanisms. Regionally, southern and northern Africa contains a higher presence of both variables than the western, central and eastern regions. The quantitative data illustrates where China is investing in each variable, and therefore, highlighting areas that present opportunities for China to exert influence through soft power.

Next, the qualitative case study analysis yielded observations that contextualize how each variable was being discussed from non-Western sources relative to each variable in context of Morocco. The first dominant narrative of opportunity consistency promoted concepts that reinforced ideas of prosperity through attending a Confucius Institute or using and supporting Chinese technology. More often, the promotion of a shared cultural heritage through China's governmental support and presence in Morocco since the 1970's is also commonly reiterated. Aspects of providing a better quality for life, convenience for any age or socio-economic status, and employment are associated in both education and technology variables. The category of government alignment as the other dominant narrative was consistently reinforced. The

promotion of strong diplomatic ties and shared cultural values between governments was found in both education and technology.

Further research can build on this research through a larger sample of sources for the content analysis that can provide more data for soft power analysis. Additional case studies for further insights and nuances of both variables collectively or for comparison would be useful in understanding consistency or deviation amongst multiple African audiences. This research study is limited to assessing how China is using only these two variables specifically through their frequency and narrative trend analysis only via Confucius Institutions and digital media hardware or technological services. Therefore, other forms of soft power such as film, art, food, language, and entertainment are not assessed. Additional educational data can be explored beyond the presence of Confucius Institutes and potentially encompass a broader range of educational variables such as research partnerships and institutional exchanges between African universities and Chinese universities or industry. Additional survey research, case study approaches, or quantitative analysis that is inclusive of a larger data set beyond education and technology, the case study of Morocco, or the 10 sources used for narrative analysis would be beneficial for further research. This study can be useful as a baseline for additional research that can incorporate a more nuanced research question and methodology which can provide additional understanding to these variables or other soft power variables that may validate these findings or identify new insights.

Lastly, this study is not aimed at assessing the efficacy of soft power on local populations within Africa, and instead, only assesses how China is using these tools as opportunity to exert influence. These findings can be useful for additional efficacy research attempting to measure soft power effects on local audiences since understanding how tools are

being implemented is fundamental before attempting to measure or assess its effectiveness. Therefore, these limitations can be combined with other qualitative and quantitative methodologies, such as regression analysis, interviews, or surveys to assess how these tools are being utilized and the efficacy in which they are perceived locally by city, state, region, or continentally. Conducting this study over a longer period of time with a larger sample size can also enable trend analysis that can help determine how China is employing these measures and if they are changing or adjusting them based on efficacy and local reception.

CONCLUSION

The research findings provide insight as to how education and technology are being used as soft power tools throughout Africa. The data suggests that education and technology are present throughout most of Africa, providing ample opportunity for both variables to be operationalized and influential as soft power mechanisms. The northern and southern regions contain the strongest presence of both variables with South Africa, Kenya, and Morocco presenting the highest amount of Chinese investment in both education and technology, thereby creating greater opportunity for soft-power-based influence. The case study of Morocco provides context to its diplomatic relations and nuances of narrative trends present in non-Western sources to understand how China is messaging Chinese education and technology, thus reinforcing opportunity and governmental alignment. Chinese and Moroccan audiences use various notions of opportunity and government support when discussing education and technology. The dominant narrative of opportunity aiming to appeal through notions of quality of life, convenience, and employment was consistent in both education and technology. The second dominant narrative of government alignment reinforces strong political and cultures ties which is consistent with current soft power literature highlighting the importance of culture and positives image of China within China's soft power strategy. Both the qualitative and quantitative analysis provided insights as to how education and technology are being implemented as soft power tools in Africa.

The topic of soft power and how it is being employed, implemented, or measured will continue to dominant debates as strategic rhetoric underscoring the rise and threat of China continues. Topics concerning China's B.R.I or the Great Power Competition remain ever-present in geopolitical deliberations of power politics and international relations theory. Ongoing debates

on soft power and its applications will benefit from further research aiming to better understand the nuances of soft power as a strategic political tool for states such as China. Understanding China's soft power tactics and nuance are important for assessing state intent that informs U.S. policymakers shaping national security interests and foreign policy.

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APPENDICES

Education		Technology	
Mean	1.3125	Mean	1.291666667
Standard Error	0.143278018	Standard Error	0.360946271
Median	1	Median	0
Mode	1	Mode	0
Standard		Standard	
Deviation	0.992659227	Deviation	2.500709119
Sample Variance	0.98537234	Sample Variance	6.253546099
Kurtosis	10.78536543	Kurtosis	15.30675413
Skewness	2.862590817	Skewness	3.596992566
Range	6	Range	14
Minimum	0	Minimum	0
Maximum	6	Maximum	14
Sum	63	Sum	62
Count	48	Count	48
Largest (1)	6	Largest (1)	14
Smallest (2)	0	Smallest (2)	0

Table A: Data analytics and coding

Country	Education	Technology	Total	Education Code	Technology Code	Code Total
Algeria	0	2	2	0	1	1
Angola	1	2	3	1	1	2
Benin	1	0	1	1	0	1
Botswana	1	2	3	1	1	2
Burkina Faso	1	0	1	1	0	1
Burundi	1	0	1	1	0	1
Cabo Verde	1	0	1	1	0	1
Cameroon	2	2	4	2	1	3
Central African Republic	1	0	1	1	0	1
Chad	1	0	1	1	0	1
Comoros	1	0	1	1	0	1
Cote D' Ivory	1	1	2	1	1	2
Democratic Republic of Congo	1	0	1	1	0	1
Egypt	2	5	7	2	2	4
Equatorial Guinea	1	0	1	1	0	1
Eritrea	1	0	1	1	0	1
Ethiopia	3	2	5	3	1	4
Gabon	1	0	1	1	0	1
Gambia	1	0	1	1	0	1
Ghana	2	1	3	2	1	3
Guinea	1	0	1	1	0	1
Guinea Basso	1	0	1	1	0	1
Kenya	4	9	13	3	3	6
Liberia	1	0	1	1	0	1
Libya	0	1	1	0	1	1
Madagascar	2	2	4	2	1	3
Malawi	1	0	1	1	0	1
Mali	1	0	1	1	0	1
Mauritania	1	0	1	1	0	1
Mauritius	1	1	2	1	1	2
Morocco	3	4	7	3	2	5
Mozambique	1	2	3	1	1	2
Namibia	1	0	1	1	0	1
Niger	0	1	1	0	1	1
Nigeria	2	2	4	2	1	3
North Sudan	1	0	1	1	0	1
Rwanda	1	0	1	1	0	1
Senegal	1	0	1	1	0	1
Seychelles	1	0	1	1	0	1
Sao Tome & Principe	1	0	1	1	0	1
Sierra Leone	1	0	1	1	0	1
South Africa	6	14	20	3	3	6
Tanzania	2	2	4	2	1	3
Togo	1	0	1	1	0	1
Tunisia	1	1	2	1	1	2
Uganda	1	2	3	1	1	2
Zambia	1	3	4	1	1	2
Zimbabwe	1	1	2	1	1	2

Table B: Data coding for education and technology by country

Type of Source		Format of Source	Name of Source	Brief Description	Date
1	Chinese Government ⁶⁸	Official document from the Chinese government- publicly accessible	fjprc.gov.cn (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	President Xi Jinping's phone conference with King Mohammad	2020
2	Moroccan Media ⁶⁹	News article-online	Morocco World News	COVID-19 Chinese aid to Morocco	2021
3	Moroccan Media ⁷⁰	News article-online	Morocco World News	Visiting Chinese economic delegation	2021
4	Chinese Government official website ⁷¹	Informational webpage for the FOCAC Beijing Summit-Africa	China.org.cn	Information page for the country of Morocco	2006
5	Chinese Media ⁷²	News article-online	China Daily	Popularity of Chinese technology in Morocco	2021
6	Chinese Media ⁷³	News article-online	Xinhua Net	Global Confucius Institute Day being celebrated in Morocco	2019
7	Chinese Media ⁷⁴	News article-online	Xinhua Net	Confucius Institutes bridging cultural exchanges between Morocco and China	2018
8	Moroccan based Confucius Institute official website ⁷⁵	Online reference from official website- publicly accessible	Moroccan Confucius Institute Official webpage	Confucius Institute at Morocco University Mohammed V-Agdal, Rabat	UNK
9	Chinese based university official website ⁷⁶	Article under "latest information" from a Chinese based University	Shanghai International Studies University (SISU)	Hassan-II University Confucius Institute delegation visits SISU	2018
10	Moroccan based Confucius Institute Facebook page ⁷⁷	Chinese social media for local Moroccan students	Facebook- University Hassan II Casablanca Confucius Institute	Confucius Institute at University Hassan II Casablanca	2021

Table C: Source table for content analysis

⁶⁸ "President Xi Jinping Speaks with King Mohammed VI of Morocco on the Phone." *Fighting COVID-19*. September 1, 2020. People's Republic of China.

⁶⁹ Kasraoui, Safaa. "COVID-19: Morocco Receives Half Million Doses of Sinopharm Vaccine." *Morocco World News*, May 2, 2021.

⁷⁰ Dumpis, Toms. "Economic Delegation From China Visits Morocco, Talks Wind Energy." *Morocco World News*, April 1, 2021.

⁷¹ "Morocco." china.org.cn. Chinese Foreign Ministry, October 10, 2006.

⁷² "Chinese Mobile Phone Brands Gain Popularity in Morocco." *Technology*. China Daily, June 23, 2021. <http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202106/23/WS60d2ab48a31024ad0bacaf63.html>.

⁷³ "Global Confucius Institute Day Celebrated in Rabat." *Africa*. Xinhua Net, September 19, 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-09/28/c_138431784.htm.

⁷⁴ Liangyu, ed. "Spotlight: Confucius Institute Sets up Bridge for China-Morocco Cultural Exchanges." Xinhua Net, November 10, 2018. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-11/10/c_137595617.htm.

⁷⁵ "Confucius Institute in Rabat." Mohammed V University of Rabat Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences. Accessed 2021.

⁷⁶ "Morocco Hassan-II University Confucius Institute Delegation Visits SISU." Homepage Latest. Office of International Cooperation and Exchange, Shanghai International Studies University, 2018. <http://mba.shisu.edu.cn/en/c1/4d/c7998a115021/page.psp>.

⁷⁷ *Facebook.com*. Confucius Institute at University Hassan II Casablanca. Accessed June 20, 2021.

Narrative Trends Code Tree		
Definition		Description
Opportunity: <i>Dominant narrative presenting various possibilities that benefit Moroccan audiences, reinforce prosperity and the image of China positively</i>		
Cultural Heritage	References highlighting Chinese culture traditions and societal values, particularly through shared interests and benefits of Mandarin	Mandarin, Chinese language, morals, values, traditions, civilization, history media, calligraphy, art, Confucianism, culture, food, educational exchanges, acupuncture
Travel	References for possibilities or utility of travel outside of Morocco, particularly to China through education from a Confucius Institute or Chinese technology	Visiting, traveling, Beijing, international competition “Chinese Bridge”, success international and popularity, expat, images of cities in China
Quality of Life	References promoting enrichment for self-improvement in education or use of Chinese technology	Crucial or integral part of someone life, business starter, utility of digital devices, opportune environment, friendships, Chinese medicine, Sinopharm vaccine, desire amongst Moroccans
Convenience	References to the ease and access pursuing education at a Confucius Institute or using Chinese technology that elevates and assists Morocco audiences.	Classes, appeal and availability to all ages, pursuing new interests, exploring goals or forming hobbies, digital devices, ease, access, price, location, services, cutting-edge and modern
Employment	References to progress offered by education and technology that allow for job opportunities within Morocco or with Chinese industries	Increased job qualifications, networking, access to Chinese industry, students, professionals, official services and training
Government Alignment: <i>Dominant narrative highlighting the strength and support between Moroccan and Chinese governments, reinforcing the image of China positively</i>		
Diplomatic & Political	References to shared political values and political partnership between both governments and government leaders	Strategic partnerships, geostrategic position, bilateral cooperation, international forums, support for Chinese positions on Taiwan, human rights, consulting services for Chinese politics, government, foreign ministry exchanges, official mutual understanding, trust
Cultural Values	References to shared appreciation for Chinese and Moroccan values and tradition	People-people exchanges, official friendly relations, Arab world, Chinese culture, consulting services for Chinese public institutes
Economic	References to increased benefits of having Chinese investment and the importance of Morocco and China on each other’s economies	Preferred location for business, industry, investors, opportunities, infrastructure, B.R.I, technological projects, China’s reform and economic model or policy, economic delegation, government aide

Table D: Code tree for the content analysis on narrative trends

CURRICULUM VITAE

Sara Hutchings is currently residing in Europe as an active-duty Naval Officer. She graduated from Wake Forest University in 2012 with a B.A. in Anthropology and dual minor in International Relations and Latin American Studies. During college Sara had the opportunity to study abroad in India and conduct volunteer work twice in El Salvador. Since commissioning in the Navy in 2013 she has deployed and served in both the Middle East and Europe. Her education, personal travel experiences abroad and professional career have driven her to pursue a degree in the Global Security Studies program.